

22 April

I have just suffered a little illness that kept me in bed twelve days, and I am surprised that I do not feel weaker after the long diet that the doctor imposed on me. (Typhlitis — but I am not convinced I really had it; my illness consisted chiefly in this twelve-day fast.) Read *Le Faucon* in La Fontaine and in Boccaccio; some of Rabelais's *Quart Lime; L'Anneau tfamethyste*, which confirms me in my judgment of Anatole France, and *Putois* even more so; some of the *Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*; some Lanson, etc. . . . Saint-fivremond.¹¹

Now I am correcting for Claudel the proofs of *Connaissance de TEst.*¹²

I wanted to go back to writing *Afax*, but, upon examining the subject further, I fear not being able to explain, even to excuse, Ajax's gesture without the intervention of Minerva or of madness; I should need the two together: practically absurd (it already is sufficiently so) and, ideally, wonderful (it isn't at all so). — Nothing to be done about it.¹³

Received a great abundance of visits the last few days, from which I could not protect myself.

The first time I went out, the day before yesterday, was for the Maurice Denis exhibit. The great praise he is receiving had made me expect more from it. Decidedly be cautious where there is unanimity of praise. . . . But those who were praising in this case felt a little in arrears regarding Maurice Denis.

In Brisson's regular article in *Le Temps* a letter from Bernstein that gives rather accurately an idea of his worth. What an infirmity not to understand the aesthetic value of the *honn&te homme*!¹⁴ But Bernstein writes: "We are tourists feverishly seeking the picturesque." Whence, in his plays, that aesthetic vantage-point of the Buttes-Chaumont.¹⁵

seeing Cross him-
self, whom I should have enjoyed congratulating.

¹¹ "The Falcon" is one of La Fontaine's *Idles* which he imitated from Boccaccio's collection; the "Fourth Book" of Rabelais is the one describing the first part of Pantagruers travels; *The Hundred New Stories* is a fifteenth-century anonymous collection of erotic tales borrowed from the *Decameron* and medieval fabliaux; Gustave Lanson's is one of the most authoritative histories of French literature; Anatole France's *Amethyst Ring* (1899) is a novel, and his *Putois* is a tale.

¹² *Knotdedge of the East* (translated into English as *The East I Know*).

^{1a} Gide did in fact abandon his play *Ajax* after writing but one scene of it.

¹⁴ The seventeenth-century ideal of the respectable, all-around man.

¹⁵ A populous section of Paris.